

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Crookston

# Writing an Annotated Bibliography

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## What is an annotated bibliography?

This is an organized list of sources (references cited), such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, Web Pages, etc., each of which is followed by an annotation or description of each item.

***Annotations may consist of all or part of the following items, depending on the assignment:***

- describe the content (focus) of the item
- describe the usefulness of the item
- discuss any limitations that the item may have, e.g. grade level, timeliness etc.
- describe what audience the item is intended for
- evaluate the methods (research) used in the item
- evaluate reliability of the item
- discuss the author's background
- discuss any conclusions the author(s) may have made
- describe your reaction to the item

## What is the purpose of an annotated bibliography?

Depending on the assignment the annotated bibliography may serve a number of purposes. Including but not limited to:

- a review of the literature on a particular subject
- illustrate the quality of research that you have done
- provide examples of the types of sources available
- describe other items on a topic that may be of interest to the reader
- explore the subject for further research

## What does the annotated bibliography look like?

You write and arrange the bibliographic entries (citations) just as you would any other bibliography. This is usually arranged alphabetically by the first word, which is typically the author's last name. Your instructor may have their own style that they prefer that you use and there are a number of crib sheets (both on the Internet and in print form) with the popular styles, such as APA, MLA, Chicago, CBE, etc. The annotation may then immediately follow the bibliographic information or may skip one or two lines depending on the style manual that is used. Remember to be brief and include only directly significant information and write in an efficient manner.

Following are two examples of what an APA annotated bibliography may look like.

Keefe, F. J., (1996) Pain in arthritis and musculoskeletal disorders. Journal of Orthopedic & Sports Physical Therapy, 24 (5):279-290.

I got all the facts about exercising with arthritis and the different types of exercise from this source. The author is very readable and includes a detailed bibliography.

Sewell, W. (1989). Weaving a program: Literate programming in WEB. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Sewell explains the code language within these pages including certain lines of code as examples. One useful idea that Sewell uses is to explain characters and how they work in the programming of a Web Page. He also goes through and describes how to make lists and a title section. This will be very useful because all Web Pages have a title section. This author also introduces Pascal which I am not sure if I will include in my manual but after I read more about it I can decide whether this will be helpful to future users. This book will not be the basis of my manual but will add some key points, which are described above.



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# APA Format for Annotated Bibliographies

## Read This First! / Basic Format / Sample Annotations

For an annotated bibliography, use standard APA format for the citations, then add a brief abstract for each entry, including:

- 2 to 4 sentences to summarize the main idea(s) of the article, and
- 1 or 2 sentences to relate the article to your research topic or your personal experience.

### **Read This First!**

The examples below are correctly formatted for student papers, with hanging indents and italicized titles, as required for student papers by the American Psychological Association (1994, 331). In order to see the citations correctly displayed on your computer screen, expand the width of the browser window to show the full border of the box below. This will allow you to see the margins and hanging indents.

#### **Basic APA Style Format for an Annotated Bibliography:**

Format your citations in the same manner as for a reference list, then follow these instructions for adding an annotation.

- (1) The citation is typed with a hanging indent. The first line is in line with the left margin of your document. The second and all subsequent lines are indented 2-4 spaces.
- (2) At the end of the citation, press the **Return Key** to drop down to the next line. Do not skip a space.
- (3) The annotation is indented as a block, 2-4 more spaces in from the left.
- (4) The right margin is the normal right margin of your document.
- (5) In a long bibliography, organize your entries by topic, such as "Multiple Intelligences". See below.

## **Sample Annotated Bibliography**

### **Multiple Intelligences**

Armstrong, T. (1994). *Multiple intelligences in the classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Armstrong describes each of seven intelligences identified by Howard Gardner. He offers an informal checklist for identifying personal strengths in the intelligences and suggests classroom applications. This book is a valuable tool for teachers at any level, with concrete suggestions for classroom applications.

Campbell, B. (1990, Fall). The research results of a multiple intelligences classroom.

*New Horizons for Learning Electronic Journal* [Online]. Available:

[http://www.newhorizons.org/art\\_mireserch.html](http://www.newhorizons.org/art_mireserch.html) . [1999, April 1]

Campbell conducted research in his 3rd grade classroom to test the effectiveness of learning centers based on the multiple intelligences theory of Howard Gardner. Results showed that students learned more effectively and displayed fewer behavior problems. Campbell found he enjoyed teaching more as well. I have replicated the MI centers in my classroom and found similar results, as described in my paper "MI centers in the 4th grade classroom," available in my portfolio.

Gardner, H. (Author), & DiNozzi, R. (Producer & Director). (1996). *MI: Intelligence, understanding and the mind* [Videotape]. (Available from Into the Classroom Media, Los Angeles, CA)

Gardner presents his theory of multiple intelligences, outlining the original seven as well as the eighth. Addressing these intelligences in the classroom gives more students access to profound understandings rather than mere factual knowledge. I enjoyed seeing Gardner "in the flesh" and found new insight into the issues of learning for understanding.

Herbert, E.A. (1998, April). Lessons learned about student portfolios. *Phi Delta Kappan* [Online]. 79, (8). 3 pages. Available: Expanded Academic ASAP/A20521064 [1999, May 3].

Herbert shares the lessons learned after ten years of portfolio assessment in an elementary school. The portfolio is less a product than a process unfolding between child and teacher. Strict requirements for contents or form tend to diminish the power of this process for learning and sharing. She traces the evolving focus through the grades, along with the involvement of parents. This article offers wonderful insights to a process that has been frustrating to structure. The answer: less structure, not more.

Text revised May 4, 1999.

For other examples of APA format, see:

- [APA Format for Citing Print Materials & Media](#)
- [APA Format for Citing Online Resources](#)

## Reference:

American Psychological Association. (1994). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.



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Questions  Contact

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